

Written and Produced by the Title VII Browning School District #9 Bilingual Transitional Project Browning, MT 59417

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George and Molly Kicking Woman

Blackfeet Lodge Story



Blackfeet Names

<u>Molly</u> Round Head

George Three Guns Komihkinni Niookskaannaa

Blackfeet Lodge

Blackfeet lodges portrayed color and style in the camps of the people. Lodges were made of buffalo hide pieced together to complete the lodge. Rocks were used to hold down the lodges thus tipi rings can be found today. The number of poles used to put up the lodge depended on the size of the lodge. As time passed, canvas was used to make lodges. Wooden pegs are used to hold down the lodge and are nailed into the ground. Designs and colors on the lodges had great significance and meaning to family groups.

Blackfeet lodges should face the East. The elders believed the old people of the past would greet the sun in the East as it begins to make its journey each day. They sat directly in line of the sun to the East to begin praying to it each day. They would offer the pipe, fill it and point to the sun. They would ask for support and would begin praying and offering the pipe to it. They would use smudge and talk to the sun asking for spiritual guidance. In the evenings the old people would give thanks for the day and smoke to the moon and stars. They gave thanks to the earth; it gives food. The buffalo was highly praised and thanks was given for a good hunt. Today this is still the way it is. Lodge owners can describe their reasons for erecting their lodges facing the East and all would offer similar stories.

As lodges were to a useless stage, they would be discarded. The design and colors can be replicated onto another or new lodge. The original lodge would be buried in a lake. It would be brought to the lake, spread out on top of the lake and rocks would be placed on it. It would sink to the bottom. This was the proper way to bury a lodge. It was left as an offering rather than disposed of in another manner.

Black Deer Lodge Design Sikawakassi' Kokaan

Molly and George Kicking Woman are Blackfeet elders today. Their lodge will be described as an example. Their lodge is eighteen (18) feet in size which is one of the larger lodges. Their lodge was given to them in 1948. An old man painted it for them. He painted it yellow and red. The original lodge became too old and it was buried in a lake near Little Badger. When their lodge was buried they took it to the lake and put rocks on it and let it sink to the bottom.

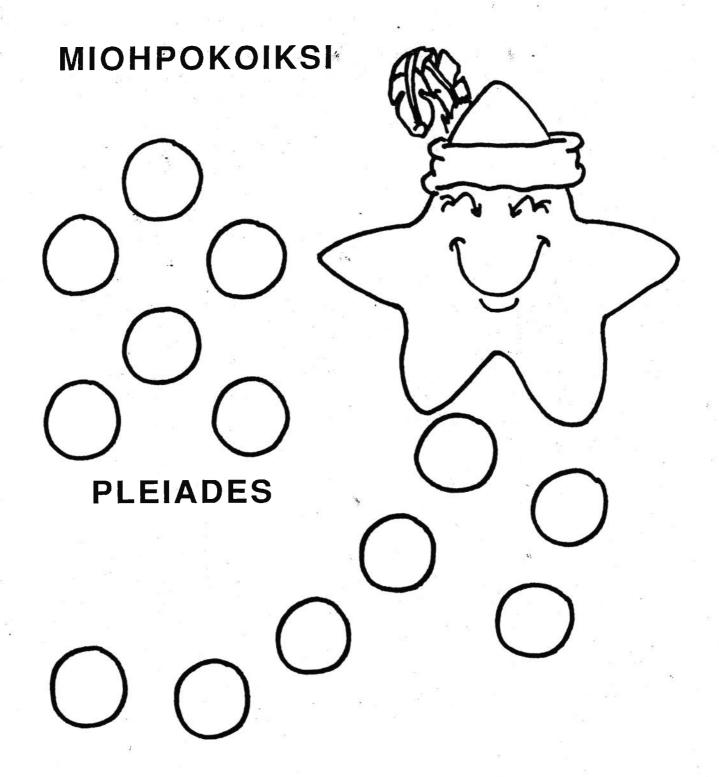
The design on their lodge represents a typical Blackfeet way of obtaining a design. This old man gave them this lodge. He was hunting and went south. He stopped by the river and went to sleep to rest. The next day he got up early to start his journey. He was met by a black deer. First it was the male deer that said, "You are so kind. We are scared of everybody and the birds and animals travelling on the ground, but you have helped us. I really appreciate your help. You don't want to do anything to harm us. Someday you put me some place where I can be seen." Soon the female deer came and said, "Put me somewhere you can see me, too." On the lodge the male deer has antlers and is painted black and is on the left side of the front of the lodge. The female deer is on the right side and she is gray. The arrow on the deer represents the throat. The heart is represented by the heart shape on the body. The two red circles on the back represent the kidneys. The rings around the legs are where hunters cut when they have killed a deer for food.

The lodge has a red bottom with representations of mountains, lakes and rocks. On the flap of the lodge are seven circles representing the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper and the stars. In the back is a butterfly symbol. The sky is red and so is the top of their lodge. Apanii was a symbol that brought good dreams to the people in the lodge. The symbol often had a buffalo tail attached to it.

To put up the lodge two poles on each end of the lodge were laid down to measure the size of it. They are tied together and erected to make a foundation for the other poles to be placed around. A total of 18 poles are used for this size lodge. Each pole is carefully laid down and spread a certain distance from each other. The last pole is put between the back support poles. The lodge is tied to this pole and then wrapped around the other poles. Pins are used in the front to connect the lodge together. Pegs are used for the bottom to nail it to the ground. The lodge has two flaps; they are attached to a pole and adjusted to the wind and air.

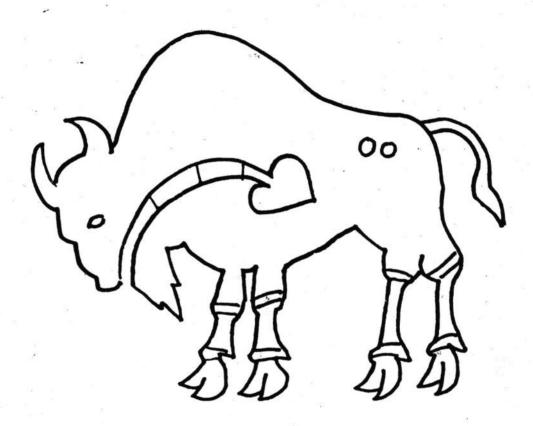
When entering the lodge, one must step in first with their left foot. It used to be where men would use the left foot and women used the right foot when entering the lodge. The furnishings inside make the lodge a comfortable place to live. Backrests made of willows are used at the end of the beds. Lodge linings are tied to the wall of the lodge inside to insulate and keep out the cold air. They are usually painted with colorful designs. The Blackfeet used to carry clothing and food in parfleches or suitcases. They were made of rawhide and painted on the outside. In the middle of the lodge a fireplace was built. Buffalo hides were used for warmth and comfort.

George and Molly Kicking Woman wanted to share their lodge story with you because it is a Blackfeet tradition not being passed down to other generations. They will teach their children and grandchildren what they know and hope that this will be a continuous process. George is 76 years of age and Molly is 70. George's Blackfeet name is Niookskaannaa (Three Guns) and Molly's Blackfeet name is Komihkinni (Round Head). They were given their names when they were children by their old people.



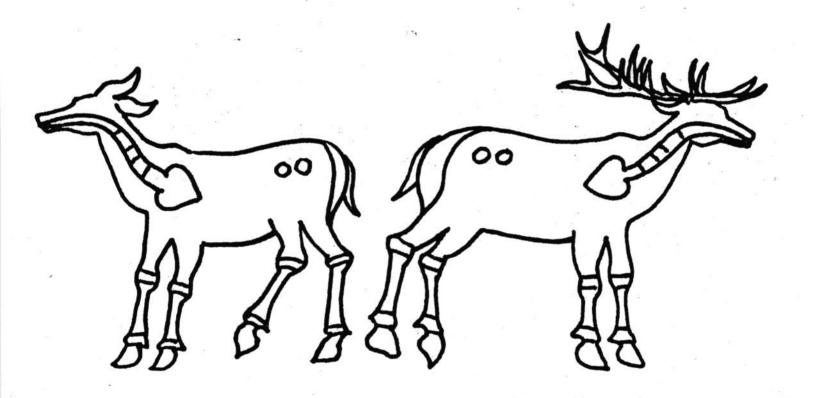
IHKITSIKAMMIKSI SEVEN STARS

BUFFALO



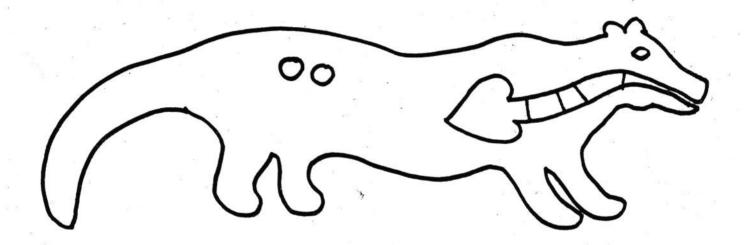
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BLACK TAIL DEER



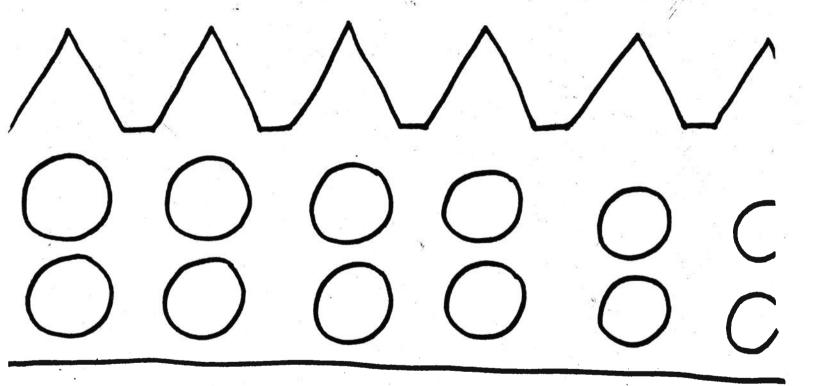
SIKAWAKASSI

OTTER

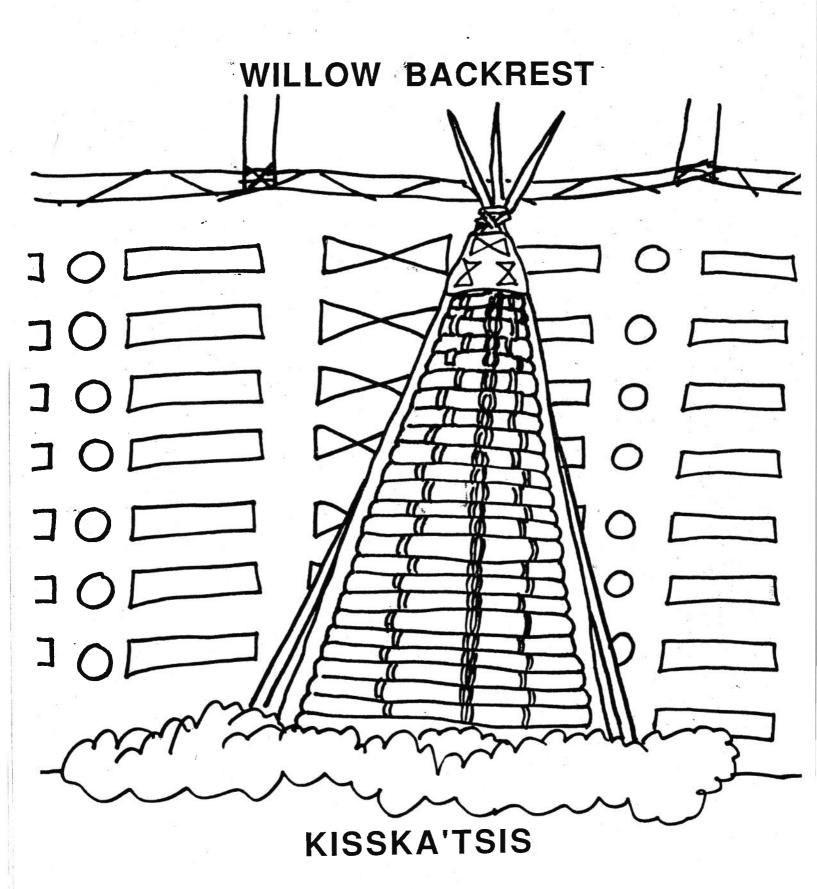


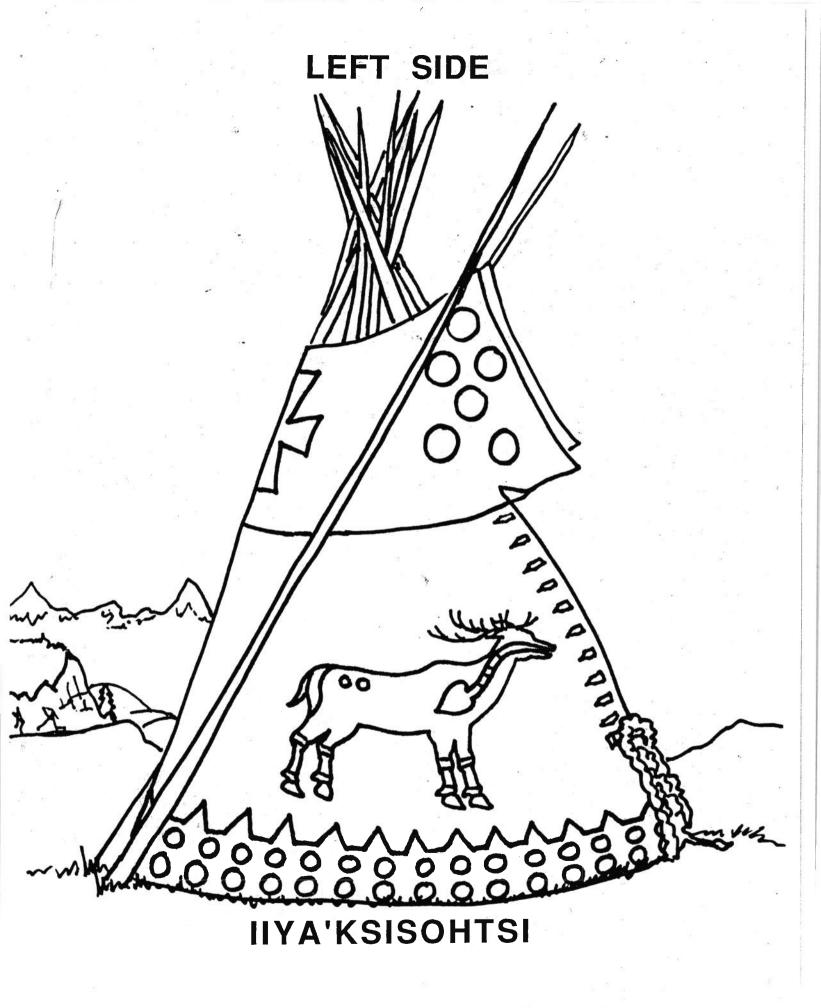
AIMMONIISI

MOUNTAINS MISTAKISTS

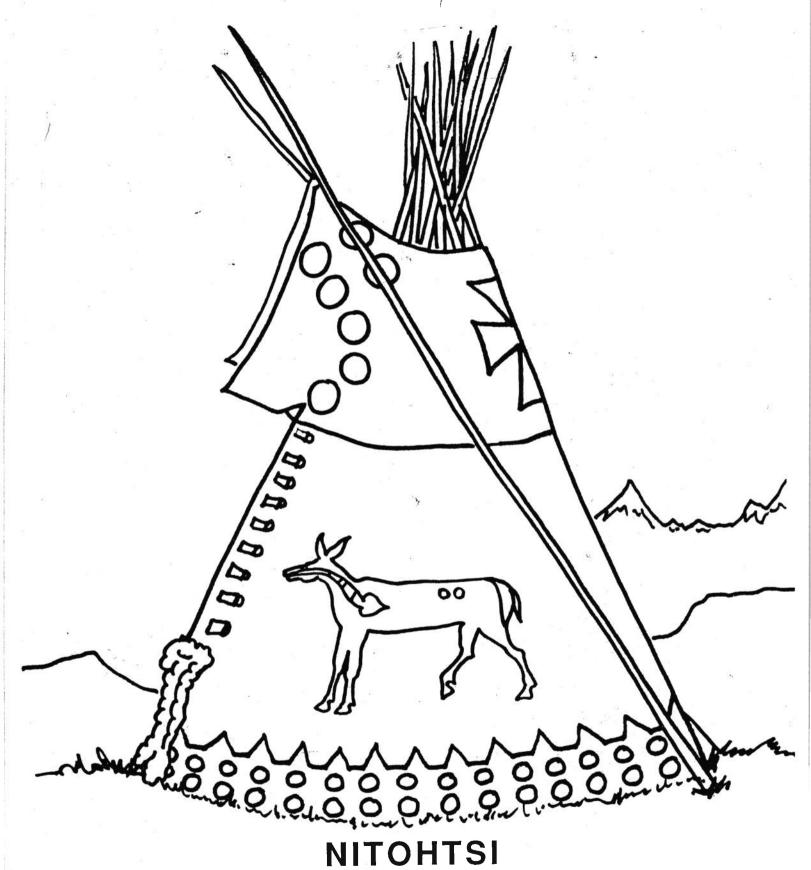


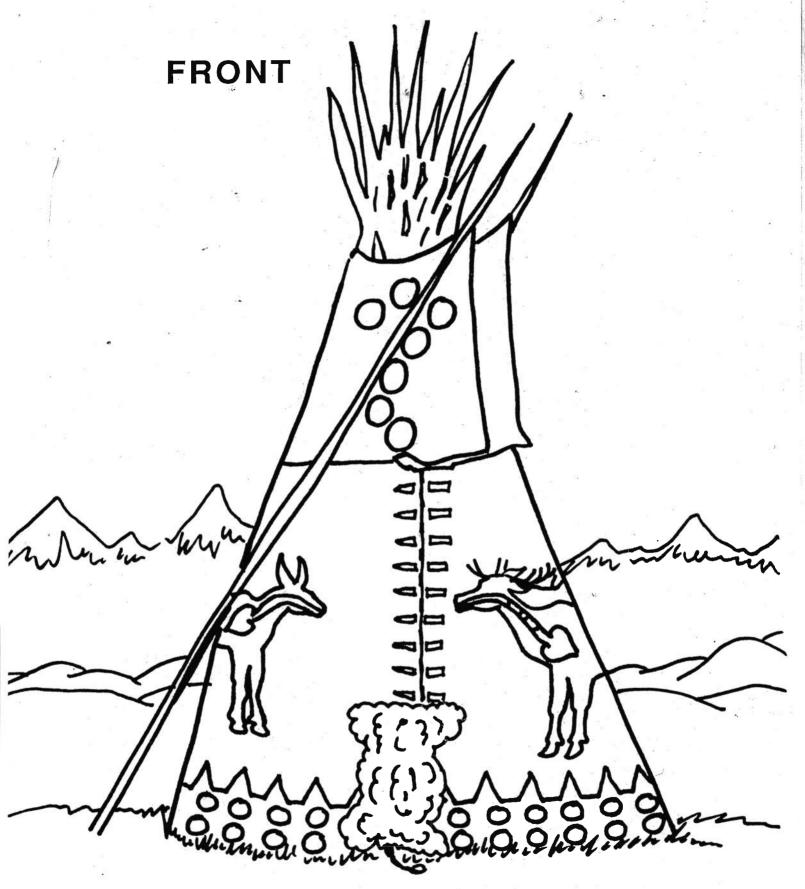
ROCKS OOHKOTOKIKS



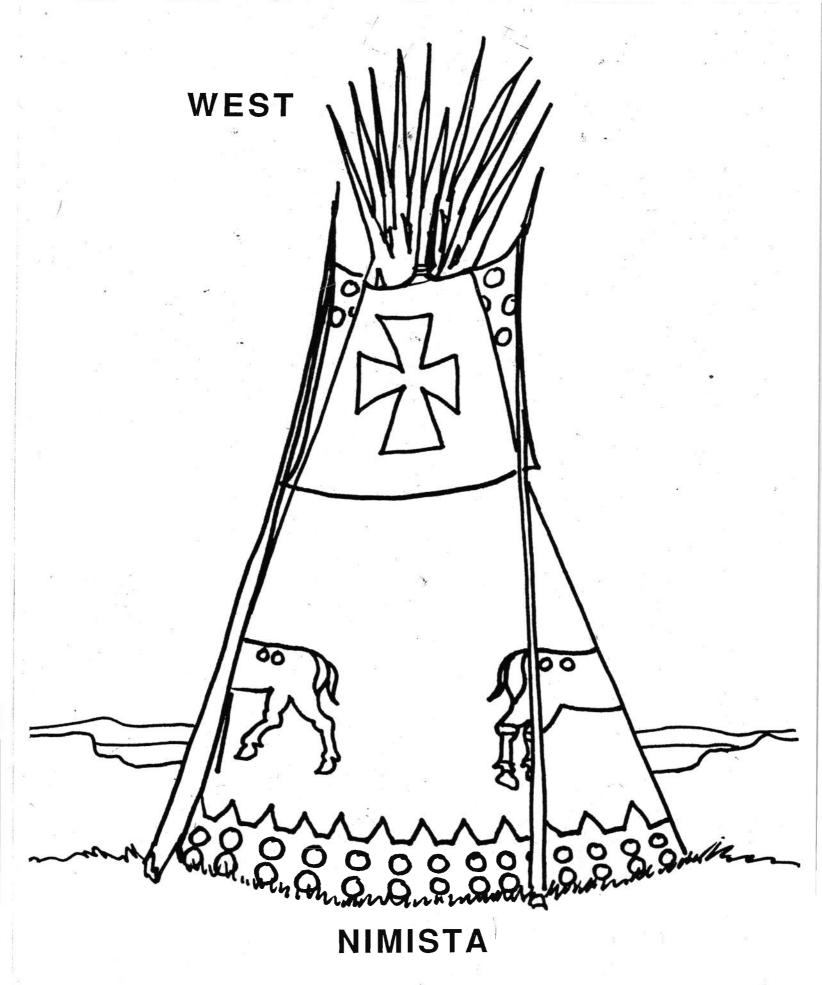


RIGHT SIDE

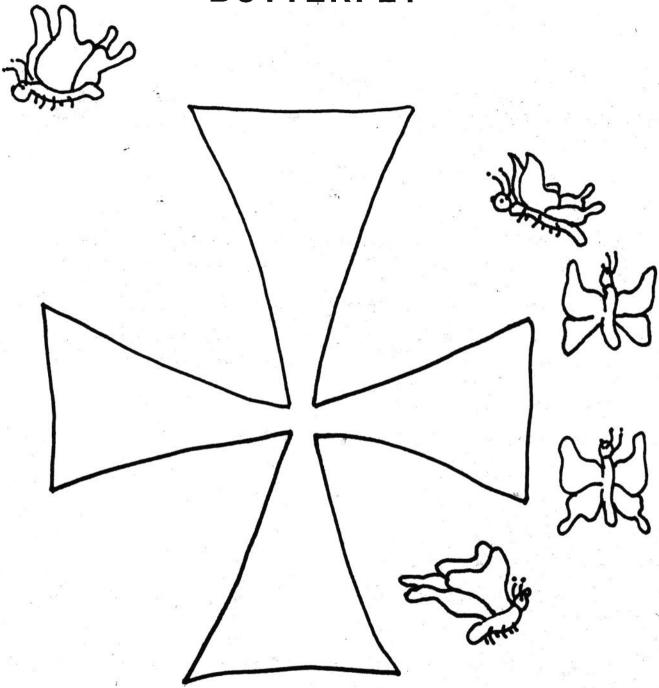




PIIHKOOHTSI

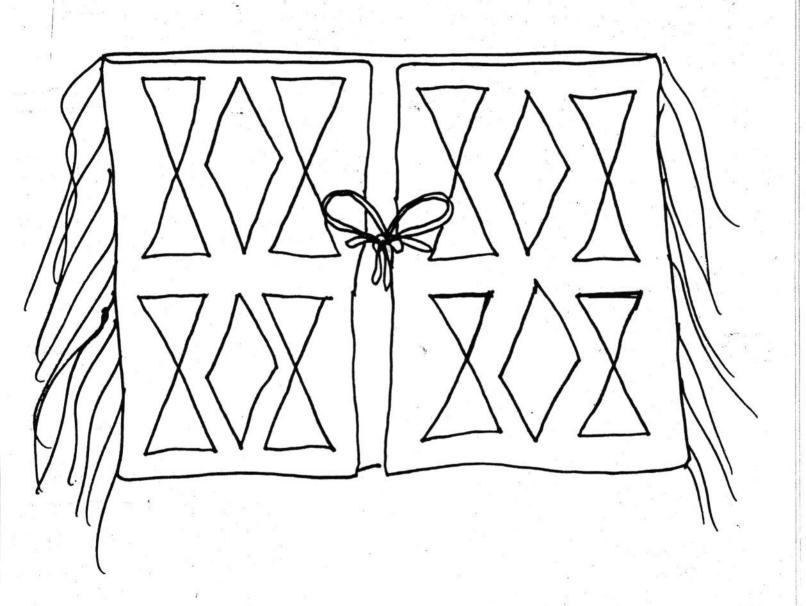


BUTTERFLY



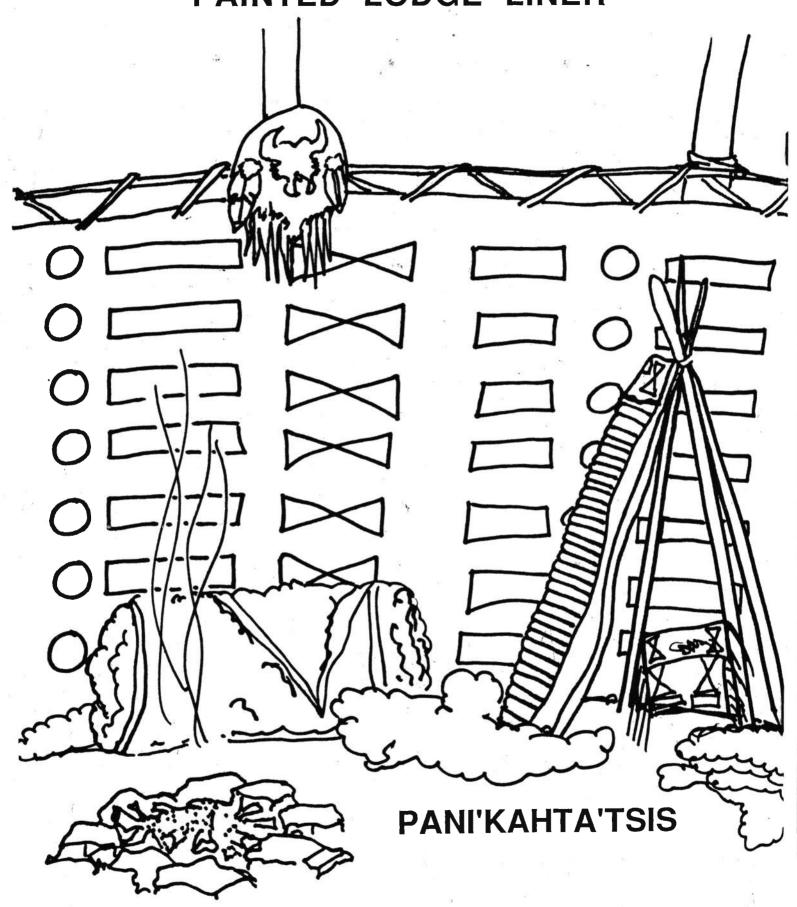
APANII

PARFLECHE

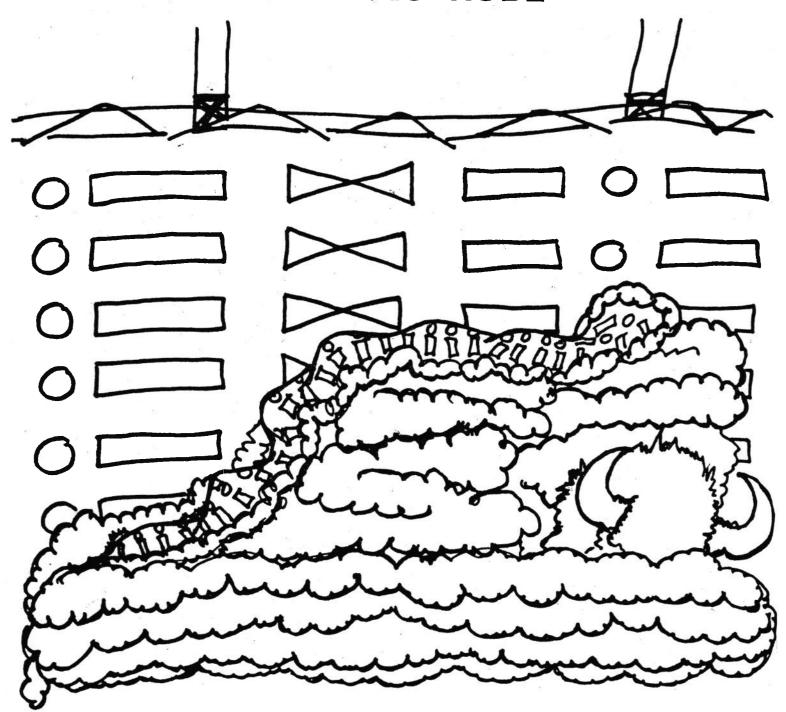


SOOTSIMAAN

PAINTED LODGE LINER



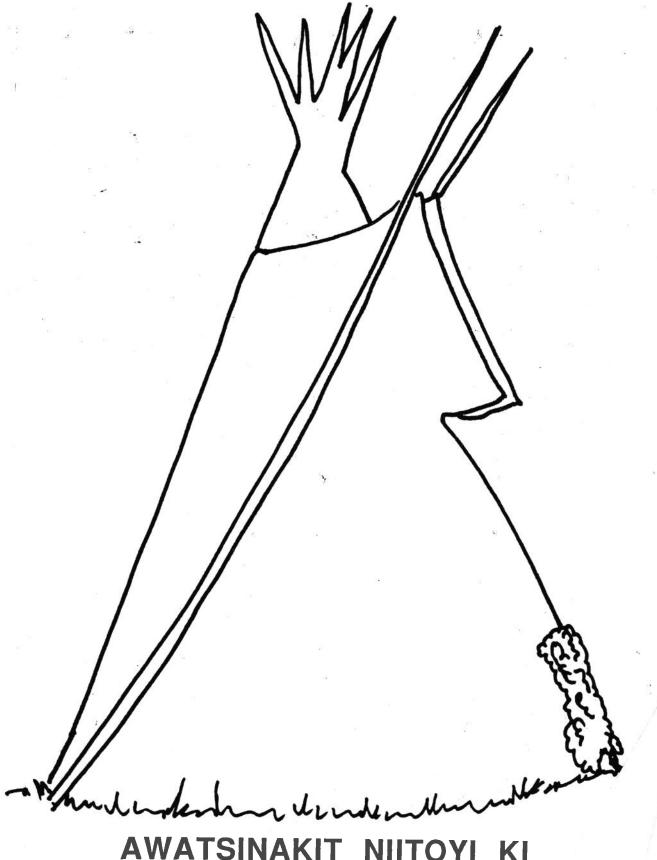
BUFFALO ROBE



INNIOTOKIS

STUDENT ACTIVITIES ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES

MAKE YOUR OWN LODGE DESIGN AND TELL A STORY ABOUT IT.



AWATSINAKIT NIITOYI KI ISTSITSINIKATOT.

THE STORY ABOUT MY LODGE DESIGN.

19
12

